

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4274

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L T E L A V I V 6 0 1 6

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, IS

SUBJECT: ISRAEL PREPARES FOR INCREASED SOVIET IMMIGRATION

1. ENTHUSIASTIC RESPONSE IN ISRAEL TO AGREEMENT ON INCREASED
SOVIET EMIGRATION HAS BEEN QUICKLY FOLLOWED BY PLEDGED DETER-
MINATION TO ABSORB SUCCESSFULLY SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN SOVIET
IMMIGRATION. OFFICIAL STATEMENTS GENERALLY CITE FIGURE OF
60,000 PER YEAR.

2. PM RABIN OCT 20 IN DINNER SPEECH (TO UNION OF AMERICAN
HEBREW CONGREGATIONS) SAID THAT NEXT TO CHALLENGE OF ACHIEVING
PEACE HIS GREATEST HOPE IS TO ATTRACT A LARGE NUMBER OF SOVIET
JEWS AND TO INTEGRATE THEM SUCCESSFULLY. THIS, HE NOTED, WOULD
BE MAJOR TEST FOR JEWS IN ISRAEL AND ABROAD. LABOR MINISTER
BARAM REPORTEDLY HAS INSTRUCTED HIS MINISTRY TO PREPARE EMPLOY-
MENT AND TRAINING PLANS FOR LARGE WAVE OF NEW IMMIGRANTS. LONG-
RANGE HOUSING PROGRAM IS BEING PREPARED IN MINISTRY OF HOUSING,
TOGETHER WITH SHORT-RANGE PLANNING FOR HOUSING SOME 90,000
IMMIGRANTS EXPECTED BY APRIL, 1976. IN REPORT TO KNESSET
OCT 21 ABSORPTION MINISTER ROSEN SAID GOVT HAD ORDERED
ECONOMIC PLANNING FOR VARYING LEVELS OF IMMIGRATION BUT HOPED
FOR 60,000 RUSSIANS IN COMING YEAR. IN PLACING DOLLAR TAG ON
PROBLEM, JEWISH AGENCY CHAIRMAN SAPIR TOLD REPORTERS IT
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WOULD COST DOLS 1.2 BILLION TO ABSORB 60,000 IMMIGRANTS PER YEAR.

3. WITH SERIOUS HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS
ENCOUNTERED OVER PAST YEAR IN ABSORBING CURRENT RATE OF
SOVIET IMMIGRATION (SOME 13,000 JAN-SEP 74), THERE IS
SERIOUS CONCERN IN ISRAEL ON ABILITY TO ABSORB SHARP INCREASE
IN IMMIGRATION. MONEY IS NOT MAIN PROBLEM. SHORTAGES OF CONSTRUC-
TION LABOR AND MATERIAL PLACE CONSTRAINTS ON EXPANDING HOUSING,
PARTICULARLY WITHOUT ADDING UNDUE INFLATIONARY PRESSURES.
EMPLOYMENT FIELD IS DIFFICULT DUE TO ACADEMIC/PROFESSIONAL
ORIENTATION OF HIGH PERCENTAGE OF SOVIET IMMIGRANTS, DIFFERENCES
IN PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND WORK STYLES, AND POSSIBLE SLOW-DOWN
IN ISRAELI ECONOMY AS RESULT OF ANTI-INFLATIONARY MEASURES. WITH
GROWING DEMAND OF LOW-INCOME GROUPS FOR CONCESSIONS IN HOUSING,
EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT, PROGRAMS TO ABSORB SOVIET IMMIGRANTS
WILL BRING THEM IN INCREASING CONFLICT WITH ISRAEL'S INDIGENOUS
DISADVANTAGED. FINALLY, EXPERIENCE HAS SUGGESTED THAT
SOVIET JEWS HAVE BEEN MOST DIFFICULT GROUP IN RECENT
IMMIGRATION HISTORY TO INTEGRATE SOCIALLY.

4. GOI MOST LIKELY TO GIVE HIGHER PRIORITIES TO ABSORPTION
EFFORTS NOW THAT AGREEMENT ON EMIGRATION HAS BEEN CONCLUDED.
THIS WILL POSE FORMIDABLE BURDEN BOTH ON FUNDING AS
WELL AS CREATIVE MANAGEMENT OF BIGGER ABSORPTION PROBLEM.
SOME ISRAELIS HAVE CITED TO US FIGURE OF AROUND 45,000
ANNUALLY AS NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS THAT CAN BE ABSORBED
WITH SOME DEGREE OF SUCCESS. FAILURE TO MEET THE NEW
CHALLENGE WILL LIKELY INCREASE THE DROP-OUT RATE IN VIENNA
AND THE NUMBER OF DISGRUNTLED IMMIGRANTS SEEKING TO LEAVE ISRAEL.
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